

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 SAJ-01

IO-11 /072 W

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R 251631Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6122

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1229

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: AZOREAN DEPUTIES DIFFER ON AUTONOMY STATUTE

REF: LISBON 1087 (DTG 191357Z FEB 76)

SUMMARY: IN RECENT INTERVIEWS AZOREAN DEPUTIES NATALINO VIVEIROS (PPD) AND JAIME GAMA (PS) EXPRESSED SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION OVER NEXT STEPS ON AZOREAN STATUTE OF AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY.

1. IN INTERVIEWS PUBLISHED FEB 25 IN CENTER-LEFT "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS," AZOREAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NATALINO VIVEIROS (PPD) AND JAIME GAMA (PS) EXPRESSED SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION OVER NEXT STEPS ON AZOREAN STATUTE OF AUTONOMY (REFTEL).

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2. VIVEIROS: VIVEIROS WAS EMPHATIC IN ASSERTING THAT REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) SHOULD APPROVE STATUTE IMMEDIATELY, THEREBY GIVING IT "CONSTITUTIONAL FORCE." HE ADMITTED THAT IT MIGHT "APPEAR STRANGE" FOR RC TO APPROVE STATUTE PRIOR TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY'S FIRST HAVING SET FORTH GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF AUTONOMY. HE CLAIMED, HOWEVER, THAT "GENERAL CONSENSUS" ALREADY EXISTED ON THESE PRINCIPLES, THAT STATUTE HAD BEEN DRAFTED WITH AN EYE TOWARD AVOIDING CONTRADICTIONS WITH PRINCIPLES, AND THAT RC APPROVAL OF STATUTE AT THIS TIME WOULD NOT REALLY PRECEDE, BUT BE "SIMULTANEOUS WITH" ASSEMBLY'S ACTION ON AUTONOMY. FINALLY, VIVEIROS WARNED, "NORMALITY" OF ISLAND POLITICAL LIFE DEPENDED ON IMMEDIATE APPROVAL OF STATUTE, WHICH WOULD ALLOW ISLANDS TO "ESCAPE THE ECONOMIC CHAOS OF THE CONTINENT."

3. GAMA: GAMA, SPEAKING FOR SOCIALIST PARTY, TOOK A DIFFERENT VIEW. HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE RC WOULD, ON THE EVE OF SIGNING A PACT BY WHICH IT WOULD "ABDICATE" LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY IN NON-MILITARY MATTERS, CONSIDER ITSELF AUTHORIZED TO APPROVE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL LAW A STATUTE WHICH, ACCORDING TO GAMA, LACKED THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT EVEN OF THE AZOREAN COMMISSION WHICH DRAFTED IT. IMMEDIATE RC APPROVAL UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS BLOW TO "DEMOCRATIC LEGALITY." GAMA, WHO HEADS ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH DRAFTING AUTONOMY PROVISIONS FOR AZORES AND MADEIRA, TERMED THE PPD AND CDS-BACKED ATTEMPT TO PUSH THROUGH RC APPROVAL OF STATUTE ON THE EVE OF ASSEMBLY'S DEBATE ON AUTONOMY A "MANEUVER" COINCIDING WITH INTERESTS OF THE SEPARATIST AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT. GAMA STATED THAT PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF ANY SPECIFIC STATUTE, ASSEMBLY SHOULD DELINEATE THE BROAD TERMS OF ISLAND AUTONOMY. SUBSEQUENTLY, REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES OF AZORES AND MADEIRA COULD DRAFT THEIR OWN STATUTES FOR APPROVAL AS ORDINARY LAW BY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GAMA'S POSITION MAY BE THE SOUNDER FROM A LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL POINT OF VIEW, CONFIDENTIAL

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VIVEIROS'S ARGUMENTS ARE DEFINITELY MORE IN TUNE WITH PREVAILING SENTIMENTS IN THE AZORES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTION, PRESS CONFERENCES, SELFGOVERNMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, AZORES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LISBON01229
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760072-0244
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760215/aaaaampg.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LISBON 1087
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JAN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JAN 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AZOREAN DEPUTIES DIFFER ON AUTONOMY STATUTE
TAGS: PINT, PO, PPD, PS, (VIVEIROS, NATALINO), (GAMA, JAIME)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006